

## [Mr. and Mrs. J. D. Sheen]

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Range-lore

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San Angelo, Texas.

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### RANGE-LORE

"My father and mother, Mr. & Mrs. J. D. Sheen, went to the San Saba [country?] when they were first married in 1868," says Mrs. J. F. Treadwell. "Indians were everywhere and always on the war path. As there were no fenced pastures, my father was away from home all the time riding to look after his cattle. For one whole summer my mother lived in a one-room house with no door shutter, just a blanket stretched across the opening. Her constant fear was that an Indian would poke his head under that blanket and crawl in. She always wondered if she could grab her gun in time, how she could escape and all the other plans she thought of but which she, luckily, never had to put into effect. [C.12 - 2/11/41 Texas?] 2 "During the time that mother worried about herself, she also worried for fear father would meet up with some Indians who would get his scalp. He did have many narrow escapes and enjoyed telling of them in later years when he could laugh heartily at their dangers. He told that one time he was helping a young man friend "steal" his girl. The girl's parents objected to the match so the young man and girl planned to elope. My father and the girl started off on horseback, met the young man after they were far enough from home, then headed for the nearest preacher about forty miles away. I suppose my father then acted as chaperon. They took all the short cuts. My father told, 'The day was fine. We rode through high grass. Just as we topped a small, deep ravine, I saw five Indians on

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horseback ahead of us. I know they smelled us for almost as soon as we saw them they turned and saw us. We turned and rode down into the ravine, dismounted and awaited the Indians. They came, riding at breakneck speed down toward us. They figured we were in the tall grass and thought they would scare us out, but we laid low and kept quiet. They would ride back up the hill, wait and watch awhile and then rush back down almost to where we were. We were armed, but not heavily, so waited to see how long these tactics would keep up. After three or four hours- these Indians were patient cusses- they went away. After waiting awhile the young man rode out to scout around. Seeing no Indians, we all continued on our way to the preacher's house. This couple have lived long and happily but the girl's dad never had much use for me.'

Mrs. Treadwell continued, "My father took part in many Indian fights. He said that one tribe or another, they were all the same to him and they would surely get his scalp if he didn't get them first.

"One day in the spring as my father and two other men were riding into camp, toward dark, they saw signs of Indians having recently passed. They had not appeared to have paid any attention to the cowboys but were headed for the small home of a settler who had moved in with his wife and children.

"My father told: 'I knew they were up to some devilment. We headed for the little house and slipped around in the brush. There were those Indians sure enough waiting until it got a little darker. Two of us stayed to be of what help we could and the other rode for the camp to bring the other boys. From our hiding place in a thicket we could see the Indians leave their horses and slip up to the house. Everything was quiet in the house but we could see the light shining out. We knew the poor fellow in the house had little chance of defending his home. My companion and I waited as long as we possibly could for the other boys, then we let the Indians have it with our rifles. Were those braves surprised? Before they could recover, the boys from the camp 4 came riding and those Indians did skedaddle

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when that bunch turned loose. The people in the house were almost as surprised as the Indians.'

"Father could tell many stories of his experiences in going up the trail, of stampedes and of riding mean horses. He knew all the ways of handling stock. He said that the later kinds of cattle, Herefords etc., were not hard to handle like the old Longhorns. They could run like race horses and did not have a speck of sense. The present day cowboy does not have to work like the earlier cowhands. If these now-a-days should happen to go up the trail, they would expect the trail to be paved, lighted with electric lights and have an "Inn" every few miles.

"Father and mother ranched for years in San Saba County, later around Menard, and their last ranch was near Christovel, Texas." Range-lore

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### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mrs. J. F. Treadwell, San Angelo, Texas, interviewed January 9, 1938.